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Thinking of 'The Outdoors' as a Social Movement

Dr Chris Loynes

Reader in Outdoor Studies

What is a 'Movement'? The Wandervogel



A type of group action by which oppressed groups challenge powerful elites

Carry out, resist or undo social changes

Made possible by freedom of expression, education and economic independence

A dialectic between 'communitas' and institutions/the state





The Wandervogel 2

Why the outdoors? Liminal spaces



Less cultural density:
further from the centre,
less dominated



‘At the edges culture thins and frays
so that reality peeps through’
Madeleine Bunting

Why the outdoors? Communitas



Why the outdoors? Progressive and democratic



Histories of resistance

The Romantic Movement



The Arts & Craft Movement

A new politics: Outdoor recreation and self education

Citizenship & Democracy

Working class emancipation

- Outdoor clubs
- Huts, hostels and cafes
- The Holiday Fellowship

A British 'Bildung' – self-enculturation



Lakeland touchstones: Daisy's



Lakeland touchstones: Thirlmere



“The preservation for the benefit of the Nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest and, as regards lands, for the preservation of their natural aspect, features and animal and plant life. Also the preservation of furniture, pictures and chattels of any description having national and historic or artistic interest.”

Lakeland touchstones: Charlotte Mason

A 'republic of shepherds'
William Wordsworth



Emmeline Pethwick: political movement

Emancipatory

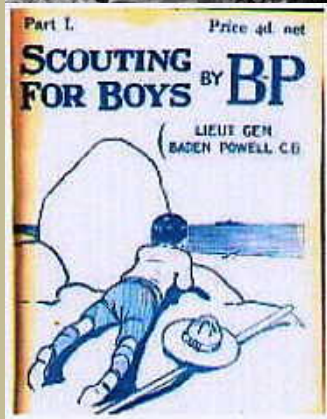
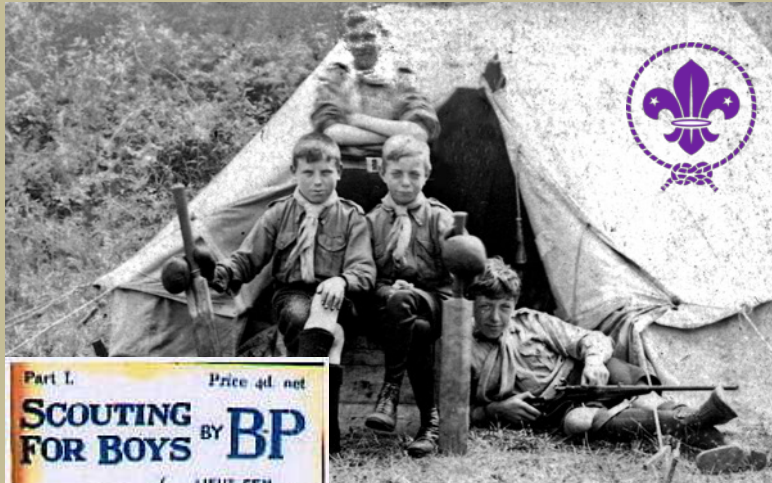
Practical self help

Link between education and working life

Empowering women through nature and retreat



Outdoor Education Movements: Scouting and Outward Bound



Outdoor Education Movements: Woodcraft Folk

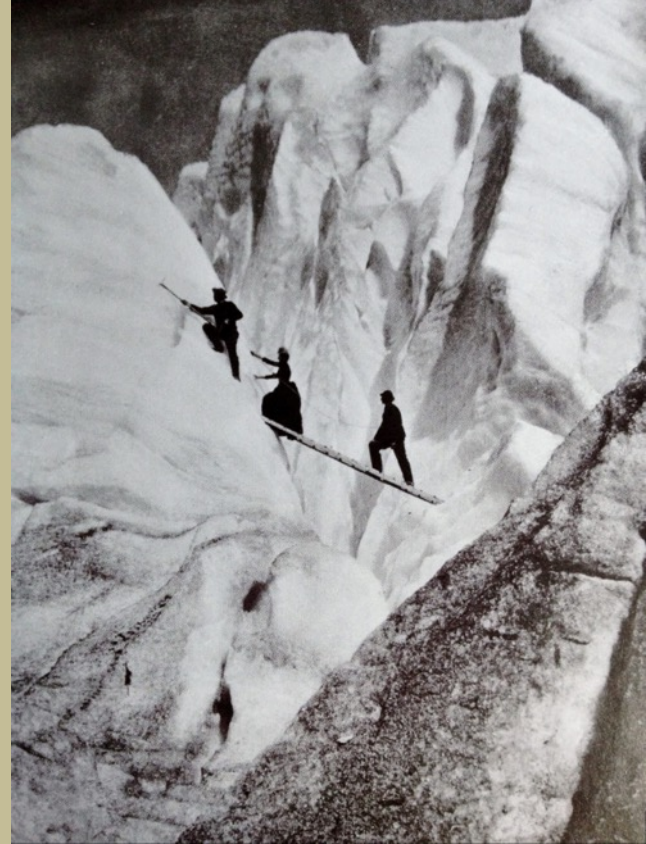


Roots in paganism and anti-capitalism and the labour movement

Inspired by romantic ideal of native American life

Peaceful cooperation between people and with nature

Alpinism: Letting our hair down



Transgressive Scotland: Rum



Transgressive Scotland: Loch Nevis



Transgressive Climbers



Contested places



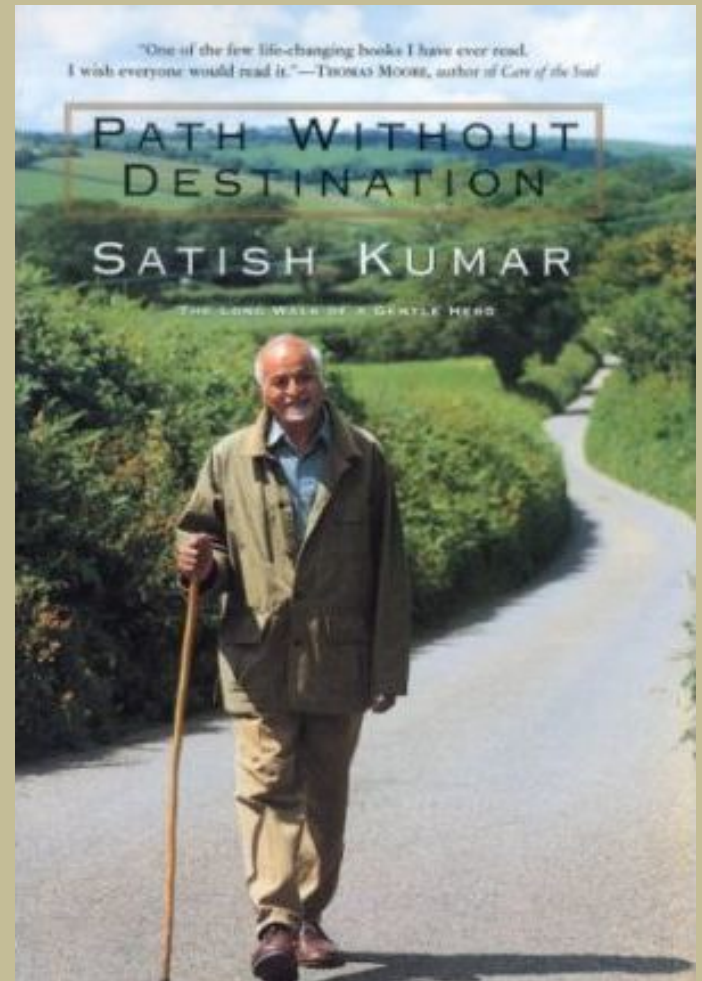
Protest: for the outdoors



POW 
PROTECT OUR WINTERS.UK



Protest: in the outdoors





School Strikes: truancy or protest?

Xtinction Rebellion: terrorists or freedom fighters?





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Outdoor Movements: in summary

- The causes can be social (in), and/or environmental (for) the outdoors
- The outdoors as public space can be a liminal or free space giving voice to a dialectic between the people and their institutions
- Outdoor movements can seek to transform or counter the dominant culture
- This can work by being with, ahead of or against the flow
- They seem always to be progressive, democratic, equitable



Outdoor Education: on the edge?

Is the failure of Outdoor Education to become mainstream in education a good thing?

- It maintains a foot in 'communitas'
- It is flexible to social and environmental issues
- It can resist the occupation of education with institutionalized curricula and pedagogies
- It is fundamentally about freedom which lies at the heart of citizenship and democracy
- Yet, is itself vulnerable to 'occupation'

A safety valve, a seedbed or a resistance?



Or are there signs of a larger Movement under way?

- Outdoor Citizens - able to co-exist with nature, understand their surroundings and reap the benefits of an outdoor lifestyle.
- Outdoor Citizens have respect for the outdoors. They have the knowledge and skills to both protect the natural environment and to personally thrive within it. They are adults who have experienced outdoor adventures throughout their childhood and understand how to manage risk and challenge. Their academic success has been aided by the impact of effective outdoor learning.
- Outdoor Citizens are future parents who know that outdoor education is a must have for their own children. They are connected to nature in a way that benefits their physical and mental well-being. They are equipped to address the challenges facing the natural world - in their community, across the country and around the world.

